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ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HANOI 000901

SIPDIS
FOR DRL/AWH AND EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/18

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: Embassy Requests that Dissident Father Ly be released from Prison following Second Stroke

REF: A) EMBASSY HANOI-EAP/MLS 11/17 EMAIL, B) HANOI 1098, C) HANOI 831, D) HANOI 821

CLASSIFIED BY: Harry Kamian, Pol Counselor, State, Department of State; REASON: 1.4(D)

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: Dissident Father Nguyen Van Ly suffered his second stroke in four months in prison on November 14. He is partially paralyzed and has been transferred to a Ministry of Public Security hospital in Hanoi. Prison authorities notified Father Ly's family of the stroke and transfer that same day, and family members have been permitted to visit Father Ly in the hospital. The Embassy submitted a diplomatic note reiterating the USG's request for Father Ly's immediate release from prison, and requested the Ambassador be permitted to visit Father Ly. The Charge reiterated these requests to a senior MPS official. End summary.

[¶2.](#) (C) Two of Father Ly's nephews confirmed to Mission officers that Father Ly suffered a stroke at 4:00 am local time on November 14 while praying. Father Ly suffered an earlier stroke on July 12 (refs c and d), but told the Ambassador during their October 14 meeting he was 95 percent recovered. (Ref b). Father Ly's nephews said prison officials discovered Father Ly at approximately 5:00 am on November 14 and immediately rushed him to the prison hospital. Father Ly was completely paralyzed on the right side of his body, although conscious. Given the severity of his stroke, prison officials approved Father Ly's immediate transfer to a Ministry of Public Security (MPS) hospital in Hanoi, which is 90 minutes from the Nam Ha prison.

[¶3.](#) (C) Family members, who have been permitted to visit Father Ly, report that he is receiving "good treatment" at the MPS hospital, noting the chief neurologist at the hospital is overseeing Father Ly's care. Father Ly has had several MRI and CAT scans which revealed a two centimeter blood clot in his brain. His motor skills have been unimpeded. Father Ly can now raise his right arm and leg approximately 20 centimeters, an improvement, but his use of both limbs remains limited.

[¶4.](#) (C) On November 17, the Embassy delivered a Diplomatic Note to the Ministries of Public Security and Foreign Affairs reiterating the USG request that Father Ly be released, noting that DRL A/S Posner had made a similar request during the U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue meeting in Washington, D.C. on November 10. The Embassy also requested that the Ambassador be permitted to visit Father Ly immediately. Charge reiterated these requests to a senior MPS official that same day. GDS Senior Colonel Chau responded that Father Ly's health is "improving" and that he is "learning to walk again," but stressed that this was the same condition he had suffered July 12. Chau claimed the hospital, not MPS, controlled access to Father Ly, but Charge noted that the hospital was an MPS hospital and that the condition appeared to be a new - and more serious - stroke.

[¶5.](#) (C) Two of Father Ly's nephews visited Archbishop Kiet on November 17 to ask the Archbishop to visit Father Ly in the hospital to give him communion and receive confession. The

Archbishop readily agreed, but according to Father Ly's nephews,
MPS denied the request.
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